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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that many of the problems with today's school curriculum are a result of the popularity of Tyler's four-step model of curriculum development. The authors present a step-by-step discussion of Tyler's curriculum development model and its rationale and propose an alternative rationale that can produce a variety of alternative curriculum development models. (JG)

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EXPLORING AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL RATIONALE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Today's headlines and editorial columns show a change in support for the schools compared with the 60's. Test scores are declining, truancy is rampant, vandalism is high and our credibility is being questioned. As ASCD members, we certainly can be expected to be held accountable and questioned about the validity of our curriculum.

A small, but vocal movement is the "Back to Basics" cry. Our response to that cry is that America's schools have never "left" the basics, and we shall attempt, orally and visually, to show you why this approach has succeeded for some, but failed for an increasingly larger percentage of today's children.

In the field and in the lecture hall we have examined and used commercial and locally-produced curriculum materials. By and large they follow a similar pattern - goals -
activities
arrangements for activities
evaluation

We have seen some success, and much struggle and upon these experiences and observations, we feel the need to challenge this model.

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After much discussion with colleagues, Ralph Tyler wrote a monograph called, "Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction." It contains four basic steps in curriculum development. Our presentation today will deal specifically with these four steps. We will share with you our concern about the steps, as they are stated and described in Tyler's book, and as we've seen what they have meant for children in the many classrooms throughout the country.

As you will notice, we will suggest strongly that the steps not only should be questioned but the total process should be dismantled and reorganized. The restatement of the steps and the reorganization of the process may indeed be considered as an alternative model. If you view it as a model and the model you perceive helps you organize your thoughts, this is fine with us. We do not, however, wish to present our thoughts in a traditional model framework, nor in a step by step procedure. We strongly feel, at this point, that each of you should create your own model and step by step procedure, if this makes sense to you. But - more about that later!

Tyler's model begins with - WHAT EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES SHOULD THE SCHOOL SEEK TO ATTAIN?

We do not reject the notion of purposes, nor the concept of objectives, nor do we wish to suggest that the teacher should enter the learning environment without goals and objectives. We do, however, reject any process where educational objectives are specifically created for a group of children by adults who do not know these children. Specific objectives which are predetermined by adults who do not know the children cannot serve those children - they can only control and restrict children's full potential for learning.

As we share with you the fact chat we reject any process where educational objectives are specifically created for a group of children by adults who do not even know these children, we fully realize that we are rejecting that which has become common practice in American education. We do know that the number of sources advocating what we reject is growing and the pressure to conform is great on all of us. Nevertheless, we are still pleading for the profession to <u>resist the pressure to conform and to work hard for change</u>. One of the things we must recognize, if we wish to change the current pressure on education, are the many sources that are applying the pressure. To remind you only of a few of these forces we direct your attention to:

1) FEDERAL PROGRAMS which now specify that predetermined objectives must be created in order for us to gain their favor and their monies.

2) STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION who are requiring, in increasing numbers, schools to create predetermined objectives; or are writing for the state and checking on school district use.

3) NATIONAL ASSESSMENT TESTS that force predetermined objectives on children by the very nature of their existence. Whether we like it or not tests we use determine to a large extent what we teach. Thus, their objectives become our objectives.

4) TEXTBOOKS whose objectives and goals become our objectives and goals when we adopt a textbook series for all children, and then teach lesson by lesson as directed in the teacher's manual.

5) SCHOOL COMMUNITIES who desire to create a set of objectives for all children in the school community - a more recent movement which is closer to the children, but still far too general.

We reject any process where predetermined objectives dictate instructional methodologies. Predetermined reading objectives which force all children in to phonics programs, regardless of the child's particular mode of learning, are not created in the best interest of children.

Piaget's work has shown that children's responses are developmental, and while age is a general factor, it is not the only factor. A ten-year old is not a ten-year-old writer, ten-year-old reader, ten-year-old speaker, ten-year-old artist, ten-year-old athlete, ten-year-old thinker. Experiences play a heavy part in each child's responses. Some seem to grow at a steady pace, some by leaps and rests - each has his own unique pattern of growth, and a variety of styles of learning.

Predetermined objectives do not match the variety of responses found in any one classroom from simple recall to astute evaluation, with all of Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy in between. Nor do such objectives encourage the latitude of responses children exhibit in summer or weekend learning.

We reject any process where predetermined objectives are considered more valuable than the interests and concerns of children. Given wood scraps, hammer and nails, we have found children grappling with much more advanced arithmetic than the subtraction of two-digit numbers expected in most predetermined second grade math objectives. (Or) Making and flying a kite calls for much more advanced geometry and physics principles than the predetermined objectives found in the fourth grade science curriculum. And we could cite animal care, rocketry and many other exciting examples of learning.

We reject any process where predetermined objectives dictate that all children of a particular grade level must learn the same material or master the same skills. Surely we do not need to remind teachers of the undisputable fact that children learn not only at different rates but that all children have unique learning styles. But this fact in and of itself does not seem to deter administrators from placing children in grade

levels and expecting teachers to help children grow a "full" grade level. Nor does it deter curriculum construction specialists who spend their hours writing scope and sequence curriculum guides for their particular districts. And who get paid for this travesty to boot!

We reject any process that limits the classroom teacher to the role of implementator and does not allow that same teacher to create with the children new and/or different objectives for that classroom and for those specific children.

Predetermined objectives not only restrict the teacher to a limited number of objectives they additionally often specify methodology. Objectives with these characteristics force the teacher into restrictive patterns which thwart a teacher's attempts to be creative.

A study at the University of Florida identified the following variables as having the greatest potential impact on educational outcomes:

1. Socioeconomic status of the family
2. Family expectations, attitudes, and aspirations toward the student's education;
3. Student self-concept;
4. Student general ability as measured by I.Q. tests.
5. Student attitudes and motivation for achievement;

6. Student sense of fate control;

7. Peer-group attitudes toward education;

8. Teacher expectations regarding learning ability of specific students or classes;

9. Teacher behavior in the classroom - how the teacher actually carries out the tasks of teaching;

10. Administrative leadership style.

When we consider those variables which emerge from the child's total environment and the potential number of life situations under each variable, it becomes obvious that our teachers are living with unique individual children from a multitude of live environments. It seems totally unrealistic to us that anyone would attempt to write a set of predetermined objectives for all of these children or for even a small percentage of these children. Meeting the uniqueness of these children demands a teacher who has the freedom to be creative. It is in the final analysis the classroom teacher and the child who knows best what objectives are the most appropriate for that child, at this time in his life.

We would not, at this point, recommend any specific grade level objectives for a given child we have never seen. Rather we would only specify that the child and teacher not be harnessed to a set of objectives written by someone who knows nothing of the child or the teacher.

We reject any process that involves only those objectives that are easily measured, such as reading and mathematics, and that rely solely on the concept of "observable behavioral change." In school we spend so much time "diagnosing" reading levels, motivating children to master vocabulary, testing to see if there is retention - all of this with adult-determined lists of words. Yet there's an entire group of professionals, cartoonists, who spend a lifetime using these same words in completely different contexts - stretching the meaning, using a word as a pun, or coining new words. They get money and prestige for showing that our language is a fluid, expanding communication experience. Divergent thinking is indeed permissable! Somehow, children are supposed to get the concept of these words - animal, cage, hold, etc. - in one artificial exposure, with additional artificial reinforcements.

How many of us have "sensed" something, but have kept such knowledge within lest we be required to "show" it, and show it beyond the shadow of a doubt? Do we ever know what "trees" are? Have you seen the giant Sequoia? or a rubber tree? or a boogum tree? Isn't the concept of trees an ever-expanding one that takes a life time of getting to know?

We reject any process that forces the educational process into the "ends" always precede the "means" syndrome. This can allow us to get into the ends-always-justify-the-means frame of reference. Many of us act as though we think children must know how to add and subtract before they multiply and divide, so we take the school years and divide the addition and subtraction, multiplication and division into neat compartments as if that will insure success. We give no credit to the child who sees mathematical relationships not called for in our lessons and we feel comfortable if all children can add sums to 10 by the end of first grade - regardless of how much time was wasted getting that small task done by the total group. Thus, the addition of sums to 10 becomes an end - not the means to solve practical problems.

We like John Zahorik's plea for a curriculum model that is based on an integrated ends-means conception of human action. If you haven't seen this article, look for it in the April, 1976 issue of Educational Leadership. It's called "A Task for Curriculum Research."

We reject any process that takes teachers longer to fill out the forms for imposed objectives than they have time for teaching and learning. Unfortunately, we have seen some kindergarten teachers who are required to fill out a monthly form, with three columns for each of seventy-eight objectives. You need not be too bright in arithmetic to recognize that this takes an inordinate amount of

precious time and energy. Means definitely became ends in this situation!

WE ACCEPT CHILDREN'S SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVES, PURPOSES, GOALS! WE BELIEVE SUCH PURPOSES MAY PRECEDE LEARNING EXPERIENCES, OR MAY, INDEED, ARISE FROM LEARNING EXPERIENCES!

Tyler continues with - HOW CAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES BE SELECTED WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN ATTAINING THESE OBJECTIVES?

The question as stated implies that all learning experiences must always flow from the stated objective. This is a legitimate question only when one moves from the concept of stated objectives.

We accept and embrace the concept that objectives can flow from activities. It is our belief that man does not always formalize his objectives for an activity prior to the activity and when he does he often changes his objectives once into that activity.

For example, let's take reading readiness. As seen in many of today's schools, reading readiness is a prime example of the lack of flow from predetermined objectives to the classroom through the learner. We know for a fact that all children come to school reading. In America

today, the public is saturated with print and all normal children can read many things without the phonics attack skills often in the readiness and beginning reading programs. Again, the wide variation in readiness appears to be largely dependent upon experiences rather than age. Thus, child selection of experiences dramatically enhances the child's desire to write and to read his story or experience chart.

This is most certainly true for those youngsters who have not succeeded with the basal text series in the primary grades. To give a continued dose of medicine for the same unmet needs of intermediate, junior high, or high school youngsters who "failed" primary reading seems to suggest educational malpractice.

Another example of the nonsense of predetermined goals with "appropriate" activities is spelling. In spite of thousands of research studies, and the time honored hours spent in teaching spelling, it is still the poorest-taught subject in our schools - and will continue to be until children do more writing and thereupon select words they want to spell correctly.

We remind you that flying kites, caring for burros, making a garden and thousands of other child-interest topics can lead to some of the same goals that adults would select, but coming from the children enables such

objectives to be met with greater depth and happiness.

Who could have ever predicted that a road runner would be stoned to death on a school playground in November? Even if this situation was predictable who could have forseen the interest and concern that the children developed for the road runner. Of course, we never know when such learning experiences will develop.

But we do know the two options that are open to the teacher when such a situation does arise. The teacher can use the situation and all the various kinds of activities that are generated by such experiences or she can ignore the situation.

In this real life situation every teacher in every grade level used the situation. In every classroom the children:

1. Discussed the moral issue of killing a road runner.
2. Discussed what should be the consequences of this kind of behavior.
3. Groups of children at every grade level became interested in the road runner and numerous learning activities emerged from this interest:

   children read about the road runner

   children wrote about the road runner

   children drew pictures of the road runner

   trips to the desert were planned to see

where the road runner lived - but children soon moved from the road runner to other desert wildlife and to desert plant life.

some children became interested in hunting laws and regulations - the topic of interest moved to other animals who are hunted in Arizona.

the moral issue of hunting became a topic for some children - fish and game officers were invited to the school to discuss hunting and fishing.

These and other activities emerged from this one situation and from each activity emerged additional interests and additional topics to explore. After a few weeks the activities were far beyond the initial situation and the initial objectives that were created by the situation. Some children never fully involved themselves in the situation and immediately moved into areas of their own interest but in every case it was the road runner situation that launched every activity and area of interest.

The teachers in this school felt free to disregard predetermined grade level objectives and predetermined curricular topics and move with real life situations that motivated children to learn. These same teachers felt

free to move from the road runner situation to topics and activities that emerged from the initial situation. These teachers felt free to creat the curriculum. These teachers exemplify how our process works and why it is so critical for us to acknowledge the inflexibility of predetermined objectives as they now exist for so many of us.

Throughout these activities countless situations occurred that demonstrated our assumption that objectives can flow from activities:

1. children who chose to work with a group investigating hunting regulations became interested in fishing.
2. children who went to the desert to discover animal homes came back with a pocket full of rocks and little information about animal homes.
3. children who began to explore desert birds often spent more time with desert animals.
4. children who began investigating endangered birds and animals of the desert often ended up in Africa with the water buffalo.

If we have discovered anything about learners, of any age, it is that learners frequently change their goals and objectives once into an activity. Our reasons for beginning an activity and the desired and result of that activity often bears little resemblance to our new goals

and objectives that have emerged from that activity. To force a learner to remain with his original goals and objectives when those goals and objectives no longer have value for the learner will destroy whatever value remains with the activity. For us, it is better to allow children to change directions.

So we rephrase the question to read - How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful to the learner? If it is not now obvious, it surely will become obvious during this presentation that our process of curriculum development involves the constant feedback from children to validate any preconceived idea we have about the learner and his curriculum. In respect to the selection of learning experiences we strongly suggest that the children assist the teacher in the selection process. If our goal is to provide experiences that are useful for the learner then the learner has to be involved in order for us to validate any decision we make.

It is not enough, however, to involve the child in selecting experiences if that is the only involvement the child has in the process. It seems rather unimportant to ask the child to select appropriate experiences if the child has had nothing to say about the objective we are reaching for and especially if the child has rejected the

objective from the beginning. How can we expect the child to be interested in or committed to any experience that directs the child away from what he values and, of course, this is what we are really doing when we ask children to pursue objectives that have no meaning or value for them.

Up to this point the two questions we are asking children to help us answer are: 1) What do you want to get involved with and learn more about? and 2) What experiences will best get you involved and help you learn the best? Or, we could reverse the questions, thus developing purposes from the experiences.

Selection is the prerogative of each learner, whether objectives precede learning experiences or arise from them. This prerogative exists for children whether we, as adults, allow it to exist or not. Even if we predetermine objectives for the children they can personally accept or reject them with or without our consent. The same thing is true for the learning experiences which we might select for children. If children value the objective and the experience they will accept it, but if they do not value the objective or the experience they will reject it. If they reject either the objective or the experience then it is questionable whether or not valuable learning will take place, regardless of how well the teacher teaches.

Quite an interesting reversal often occurs when teachers are so deeply involved in pushing their own purposes and experiences. Teachers develop tunnel vision. What they plan and make and say is of utmost importance and while they are so busy believing themselves, they miss the many things children are learning - much of which is anti-education. Have you listened to the jump-rope chants? How many of the child parodies do you know? "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school..."

Also, any teacher we could question knows that all of the children in one class have learned many things before coming to school, will continue to learn many more things after school, on weekends and during each school break, and that when these learnings are rated from child to adult experiences, or from simple to complex, each child has some adult, complex experiences from which that child has learned. The rephrasing of the question(s) proposes moving from that child and his collection of experiences to activities he helps plan. From such meaningful activities will come his objectives, many of which are identical to those some adult would have imposed on that child, and some of which the adult would have though impossible for that child to achieve.

We do not view this position as being far cut and neither does Tyler, since he has taken a similar position. Tyler says, "If he (meaning the student) does not want to learn what the school seeks to teach, he sits passively during the presentation, he does not learn." We all are saying that each individual child has the power to reject our objectives and learning activities. Since this is a fact, we recommend a reduction of time and energy now being spent in the development of objectives and ensuing activities. Instead, it is our belief that effective learning environments will and do exist with the support, creativity and basic assistance of the learners.

Tyler's model continues - HOW CAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES BE ORGANIZED FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION?

This question as phrased assumes that instruction (teaching) leads to learning. We cannot accept this assumption. Teaching and learning can be, and often are, two distinct functions in the classroom. It is our contention that a teacher can teach, and be teaching well at the same time some children will not be learning.

This question as stated further suggests to us that learning experiences are to be organized for effective

instruction. We have extreme difficulty proceeding with that point of view. Our major difficulty lies in the fact that we cannot justify learning experiences for any reason other than for learning.

We believe that teaching must be subordinate to learning. However, the manner in which we go about educating children leaves no doubt in our minds that learning is subordinate to teaching in the present educative process. The educative process that has emerged in American education has placed the teacher and teaching above the child learning. This statement becomes clear to us as we observe classroom after classroom where teachers are in the distinct role of knowledge giver and the children in the role of knowledge receivers.

We do not accept the teacher as one who brings knowledge to children. Rather, we accept the teacher as one who guides children into learning experiences where children continue to increase their ability to make sense out of what they experience. What children discover in this process may indeed be classified as knowledge but it is their knowledge, not the teacher's knowledge.

The major rationale of this process is that knowledge exists outside the learner. We reject this concept since

we believe that knowledge exists with the knower. When the knower chooses to take for his own that which he has learned from his personal life experiences, that then becomes his knowledge. This is what makes sense to him.

To reiterate, the process that has emerged in America places teaching above learning. Motivation, therefore, become a big problem. Yet we perceive it to be a problem only when the teacher is asking children to move in directions the children prefer not to move at any one time. It is our belief that teachers who perceive knowledge as existing out there and who perceive their role as one of giving this knowledge are most concerned about motivation. It has been our experience that they are concerned because their children are not naturally motivated to move in these directions. Because of this they must continually search for motivational techniques that force children into participation.

When children with teachers select personal objectives, and learning experiences, or when they are involved in self-chosen activities and they see personal objectives being formulated, motivation, like discipline is no longer a problem. We have watched thousands of children devote hours to tasks they chose and set objectives for - more complex than specified for their "grade level." The

inverted cage we propose offers more than a mere inside-out change in curriculum development, and such a change upon learning rather than upon instruction.

Another deterrent to effective learning is often beyond the control of the teacher, however. It lies with us, as curriculum coordinators, building principals and professors. When we support administrative devices such as first, second, third, etc. grades, remedial reading teachers, text series as required reading, scope and sequence charts, limited kinds and amounts of unusual supplies, letter grades on report cards, equal number of pupils in each teacher's classroom, etc, etc, we are the organizators who diminish effective learning. These recommendations from us create a learning environment for the teacher and children which says that administrative convenience takes priority over individuality of children and their need to select experiences for effective learning. We cannot put all the blame on the teachers - they are caught in our administrative web of efficiency!

And we are all caught in the restrictive organizational plan of the agricultural calendar more appropriate forty years ago, of daylight savings time, of no tax support for three and four-year-olds, or twenty-three and twenty-four-year-olds, of minimum hours per day for financial support, but on the other hand limited maximum

hours dictated by the janitor's contract. College professors are caught in a departmentalized setting and their lecture rooms can scarcely be made hospitable because the next professor needs the room in fifty minutes. Buses are not available for transportation to schools, and how far can one go in fifty minutes? And naturally no one would expect the University to change its calendar to meet that of the public schools!

Even the construction of the buildings is a stricture. Polished, hard surfaces looking more like kitchens than living rooms, fences around buildings, libraries locked up all weekend and during the summers, hard desks and hard chairs. Experiencing? Yes - but scarcely conducive to effective learning.

How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

> By this time you are aware of the probability of our rejection of the current acceptable evaluation techniques.

Since we accept children's selection and development of objectives, we cannot accept standardized measuring tools, particularly national measures, since they may or may not measure the very objectives the children have developed and selected.

Since we accept the validity of children selecting appropriate (for them) learning experiences, we feel strongly that demonstration, application and modification of such learnings is appropriate evaluation.

Since we accept children's organization for learning, and their patterns of organization will vary considerably from child to child, we believe the examination of such patterns to be an appropriate form of evaluation. This would tend to reduce the "yes, but ..." syndrome often found among teachers and administrators who are reluctant to organize and evaluate for and with children.

We think ...

evaluating diverse and converse growth

evaluating self growth and self within a small and the larger community

evaluation techniques for the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor

evaluation of the elimination of restrictive tunnel vision and of the expansion of an educated child

In Tyler's model, the child is measured against other children by the degree to which he completes the learning experiences created by the teacher within the organizational pattern imposed by administrators - all to achieve objectives written by someone who doesn't even know him!

Rather, we think it important for the child to learn many techniques for self-evaluation, with the right to vary the degree to which he will be compared with other children, and with a growing awareness that he is different from any other child and therefore, must be growing in his comparisons of himself and others.

Children know how to organize for learning. We see the less skillful youngsters imitate the more skillful youngsters. We see them help each other to achieve; we see all ages of them playing together after school. We trust their ability to organize experiences for effective learning, just as they have chosen effective experiences because of or leading to personal objectives. We urge you to move your organizational problems to the world of children and let them show you how truly educated they are.

If we were to propose an alternative model, it would be many-faceted. Actually we are proposing many alternative models, one for each of you. We will share with you some components that are important to us!

CURRICULAR RELATIONSHIPS

from to

ADULT _____ CHILD

We believe adults belong in the educational environment but primarily as a learner, with the child. With more

variety in experiences the adult may help the child question, test explore, validate, make, etc. to expand the child's experiences, but each will teach the other, and each will learn from one another.

TEACHING _____ LEARNING

We believe school exists for children to learn together, not for adults' administrative convenience. Possibly adults have more kinds of experiences and can see processes that enable them to be mature adults. Children also have valid experiences and are struggling to test processes. Together they value, validate and become more educated.

ENDS-MEANS _____ MEANS-ENDS

Contrary to the behavioral objective movement seen in some parts of the country, we recognize that both ends-means and means-ends are appropriate ways to learn. Sometimes ends precede means, but sometimes means lead to appropriate ends. We neither expect to educate our children to become robots nor expect them to create out of the blue, always with no forethought. Each child with each experience dictates the correct relationship, or learns with its self-correction.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ——————————— KNOWING

The mythical "body of knowledge" is composed of many persons' knowing. Even that which is written for posterity is tainted by the limited perspectives of the author, and further limited by the editor, the publisher and the reader. We know what we experience, either first hand or vicariously, but we are selective in our knowing. To force children to know what we think is right for them is not only foolish, but also faulty reasoning.

PREDETERMINED CURRICULUM ——————— EMERGING CURRICULA

Predetermined curriculum is indoctrination. Emerging curricula is evidence of children and adults learning together, dealing with today's experiences by looking back on yesterday's and looking forward toward tomorrow's, and dealing with each one's personal goals. It implies on the spot curriculum constructions.

SKILLS ——————————————— LIFE SKILLS

When skills are means for dealing with today's experiences, they are life skills. When they are taught as ends they become controls. Too many of America's children eagerly await the closing school bell each day so they can be free to practice life skills.

PREPARATION ——————————— EXPERIENCING

Much of the curriculum deals with preparation for later life rather than living fully today. We learn map skills in the third grade because of the map skills test in the fourth grade. We learn cursive writing in the second grade so we can sign checks as adults. We learn the alphabet so we can learn to read - is that the way you learned how to read? We believe a rich experiencing today is the best preparation for tomorrow. We believe that school, for children, is their life; it is not a preparation for life.

BASICS ——————————— OPEN EDUCATION

Since "basics" seems to be so closely related to culture and subculture patterns, our belief is that America's schools have an obligation to go beyond the limitations of any one culture or subculture to enable each child to explore the full range of curricular options. Concepts do not develop in a vacuum - they grow with skills and content in appropriate personal juxtaposition. The current stance of "basics" is that of one scope and one sequence, usually with a limited learning style - open education stance implies growth by leaps and bounds, variation in learning styles, and unlimited learning.

Our curricular models are actually self-propelling processes:

perceiving to behaving to becoming to perceiving to behaving to becoming to perceiving to behaving to becoming to ... infinity!

Let's uncage learning!

Dr. Evelyn Carswell
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